

#deleteFacebook?



Facebook is the ultimate **social networking platform**. This means that it is a very widely used digital way for people to connect with their friends, colleagues, clients, – anyone they might want to find or keep in touch with.

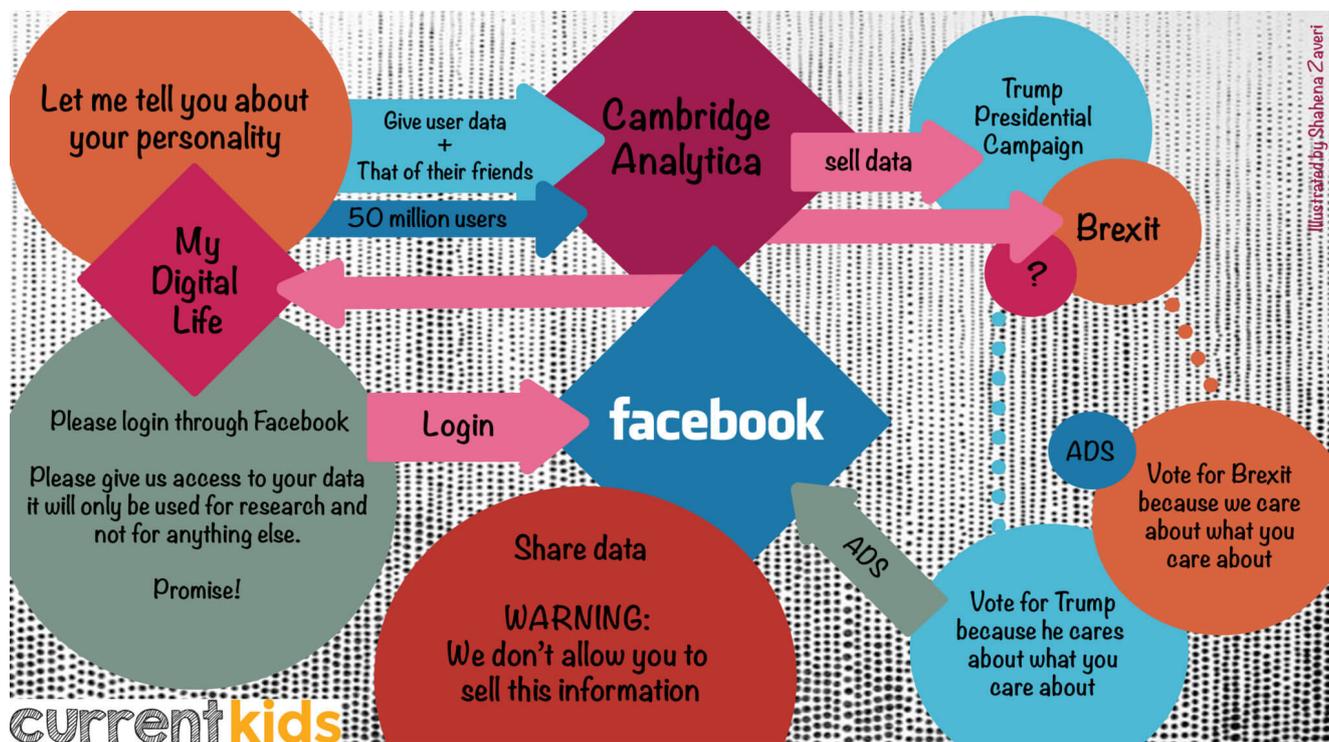
Facebook gave us the first real tool to reconnect with friends and family, a lot of whom we hadn't kept in touch with over the years. That is, if they had signed up for it too. And the number of people who joined this online community kept growing.

Facebook has now also become a way for businesses to advertise their products, for people to form smaller groups to discuss things they have in common, even to find people with the skills they might want for projects they are working on.

But this means that they have to collect data. On you and me. On what we like and don't like. And on our connections on Facebook – our friends and family.

Got it. So what have they done wrong now? Facebook has been in the newspapers almost every day this past week. They are in trouble for sharing information on more than 50 million Facebook users, with an app called 'mydigitallife'.

What has actually happened? Let me de-mystify it for you, from what I have read from the newspapers 'The Guardian' and 'The New York Times'.



Cast of Characters:

Cambridge Analytica (CA): This is a company that collects data (from all kinds of sources – like polls and interviews they

conduct) analyses it, and then helps companies with their strategies. Their clients include political parties.

Alexander Nix: CEO of CA.

Steve Bannon: was US President Trump's Chief Strategist (planner). And was on the Board of CA.

Chris Wylie: Whistleblower. CA employee who saw all the stuff the company has done, couldn't live with it, and went to the press (The Observer) with his story. He 'blew the whistle' and alerted people about what was going on.

Mark Zuckerberg: CEO of Facebook

Aleksandr Kogan: Designer of app 'mydigitallife'. Kogan analyses peoples' behaviour.

Cambridge Analytica hired Aleksandr Kogan to design 'mydigitallife'. It was a personality quiz and told you things about yourself. The app told users to sign in through Facebook, and that their data would be used only for research purposes, not in any other way. Some 270,000 - 300,000 people downloaded the app apparently.

This app then took their information from Facebook. It also took the information of anyone they were connected to. It then gave this information to Cambridge Analytica. Cambridge Analytica sold access to all this information to The Trump Campaign and apparently the Brexit campaign. They suddenly knew what 50 million people cared about. Individually. And designed advertisements to win them over.

For example, if you love playing football outdoors and there are no football pitches in your neighbourhood, they might have targeted you with an ad on Facebook, saying 'if you elect our candidate, he will ensure you have enough outdoor space for play.'

It is said that Cambridge Analytica was able to help President Trump influence US voters in a way that they voted for him.

How has Facebook reacted? Mark Zuckerberg, CEO of Facebook, has said that he is sorry about this violation of privacy, and will look into it. It is unclear what steps will be taken to ensure that this kind of thing doesn't happen again. Some users are so disgusted with this that they have started a campaign called #deletefacebook, telling users not to trust the company with any more information.

In fact, there is a big election in India in 2019, and the authorities are looking into which political parties, if any, have hired Cambridge Analytica. Stay tuned!

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